



## U.S. Department of Justice

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### **DEFENDANTS SENTENCED IN TWO STATE CASE**

Rick Thompson, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced today that Clifford C. Poston, age 48, of Thomson, Georgia, Darwin A. Schneider, age 44, formerly of Grovetown, Georgia, and Joseph J. Ribordy, age 57, of Lake Zurich, Illinois, were sentenced in the United States District Court in Augusta, Georgia. The sentencings followed earlier guilty pleas by each of the three defendants to various counts of an indictment charging them with conspiring to defraud and overcharge the Monsanto-Searle Pharmaceutical Company, ("Searle," now known as Pharmacia), on various construction jobs at Searle's Augusta plant, which produces the arthritis drug Celebrex. At the earlier guilty plea hearing, it was shown that Poston was allowed to overcharge Searle \$1,558,387.00 by Searle's chief engineer, Schneider. In exchange for allowing the overcharging, Poston paid kickbacks to Schneider for Schneider's purchases of sports cars, jewelry, trips, dating services, and vacation homes, and the purchase for Schneider of a diner located in Evans, Georgia.

Chief United States District Judge Dudley H. Bowen, Jr. sentenced Poston to serve 30 months in prison, to be followed by a 3 year term of supervised release. Poston was also ordered to pay Searle \$1,558,387.00 in restitution and ordered to pay, in addition, \$915,105.00 to the I.R.S. for back taxes, penalties, and interest owed. The Court also noted that Poston must forfeit to the federal government all of Two State's interest in the Evans Diner, as part of his sentence. In addition, Poston was ordered to pay \$4,200.00 in special assessments, along with 200 hours of community service, following his release from prison.

Chief Judge Bowen sentenced Schneider to serve 38 months in prison, to be followed by a 3 year term of supervised release. Schneider was also ordered to pay Searle \$1,558,387.00 in restitution and another \$2,117,514.00 to the I.R.S. for back taxes, penalties, and interest owed. The Court also noted that Schneider must forfeit to the federal government all of his interest in two boats and two jet skis which had been seized by the government during the investigation. In addition, Schneider was ordered to pay \$3,875.00 in special assessments, along with 200 hours of community service, following his release from prison.

Finally, Chief Judge Bowen sentenced Ribordy to serve 4 years on probation, with the first 6 months to be served in home confinement. In addition, Ribordy was ordered to pay a fine of \$50,000.00 and a \$100.00 special assessment.

Thompson praised the special efforts of I.R.S. Special Agent Joel Ozburn, along with F.B.I. Special Agent Carl Herron, and former I.R.S. Special Agent Tracy Atkinson, during this complex three year investigation. Thompson also praised the efforts of the lead prosecutor on this case, Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard H. Goolsby, and First Assistant U.S. Attorney Edmund A. Booth, Jr.

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